

With regard to the outstanding rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Applicant requests that this rejection be held in abeyance until such a time as allowable subject matter is indicated.

With regard to the rejections based upon prior art, Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's opinion stating that the outstanding claims are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious based upon U.S. Patent No. 5,322,290 to Minami ("Minami"), in view of U.S. Patent Nos. 5,730,669 to Huang ("Huang") and 5,555,584 to Moore III et al. ("Moore"). The Examiner responds to the remarks of the Amendment filed July 7, 2000 by reiterating the opinion that it is proper to combine the references of Moore, Minami and Huang in meeting the outstanding claims.

Specifically, the Office Action indicates that the Examiner considers Minami to disclose the broad concept of teaching a two-layer grip with the outer layer being of high viscosity. The Office Action follows by stating that Moore discloses a suitable high viscosity material, and Huang discloses a shell having circumferential lips and a central section with a depth as defined by the first and second lips. The Office Action takes these three very different features and concludes that because they all relate to golf grips it would have been obvious to utilize the features thereof in creating a grip such as that disclosed by Applicant.

In fact, and in contrast to the assertions presented in the outstanding Office Action, the disclosed golf grips consider very different problems and the teachings therein would not be appropriate for modifying the other cited patents. Specifically, Minami does disclose a two-

piece golf grip having an outer surface with a high viscosity and Huang does disclose the inclusion of a cap and guide cylinder. However, Huang is concerned with the fabrication of an injection molded grip and makes no suggestion as to the necessary depth for these members in the event one were to incorporate a high viscosity grip member between the cap as being suggested in the outstanding Office Action. In fact, nothing in the cited prior art suggests the necessity of providing lips for maintaining a high viscosity outer surface member upon an inner shell as is disclosed and claimed in the present application.

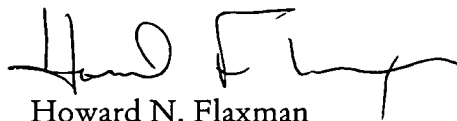
It is, therefore, Applicant's opinion that there is no suggestion in the prior art for combining Huang and Moore to modify Minami to include upper and lower lips shaped and dimensioned to conform with the thickness of the viscoelastic hand surface positioned within the central portion. As such, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn.

With regard to the statements maintained in the Office Action that "Moore clearly discloses a thickness for sheets of this material in the ranges as claimed. Golfers have all sorts of needs from minimizing weight of a grip in order to lower a swing weight of a club to maximizing grip material to minimizing damage to a player's hand when impacting a ball. These ranges are a suitable range that can be selected by a golfer". Applicant finds it difficult to understand how this supports the obviousness being proposed in the Office Action. While each of the statements regarding the thickness of a gripping surface of a golf club are true, they have no bearing on whether it would have been obvious to modify the disclosed grip of

Minami based upon the disclosure of Huang to include the claimed first and second lips which define a recess in which the viscoelastic hand surface may be readily positioned. In fact, the only way one would look at Huang and consider including lips to retain the viscoelastic hand surface disclosed by Moore, would be to look at the present disclosure for a suggestion of the combination. That is, nothing in either Huang, Moore or Minami disclose the necessity of providing first and second lips for maintaining a viscoelastic hand surface in position on an inner shell. Once again, the contention that it would have been obvious to modify Minami based upon the very different disclosures of Huang and Moore is improper and Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the preceding remarks, it is Applicant's opinion that nothing in the prior art either discloses or suggests the claimed invention. Applicant, therefore, believes the application is now in condition for allowance and Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration. If the Examining Attorney believes that a telephone interview would be helpful in expediting the instant matter, please contact the undersigned at (703) 920-1122.

Respectfully submitted,



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